

# *The* Commonweal

*February 16, 1951*

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## THE BRITISH VIEW OF U. S. POLICY

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

*THE MOOD IN ITALY*

## *No Port in the Storm*

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

*LABOR'S SILENT PARTNER*

## *The Catholic Press*

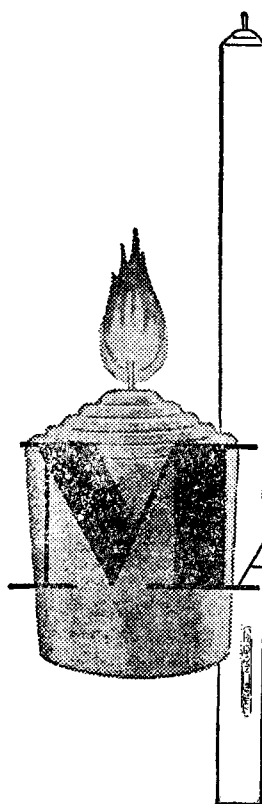
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# The Commonweal

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## WEEK BY WEEK

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### *Britain's Diet*

**I**T IS HARD for the average American to picture in so many ounces the amount of meat permitted a British family according to the latest ration. Ten pence worth a week per person hardly supplies enough for one good meal. Meat consumption is now calculated at one-eighth the pre-war average and half what it was during the most rugged days of the war. The traditional week-end joint, which served as the basis for meals all week, is no longer available.

As if this were not depressing enough, housewives are confronted with other obstacles of no mean dimensions. Butter, eggs, cheese, cooking fat and sugar remain in short supply. Essential ingredients are lacking for such national favorites as bread pudding, rice pudding and deep-dish pies. Unrationed foods such as poultry and rabbits are priced too high for many families. Those who can afford to supplement their rations by eating out are comparatively few.

In the midst of these deprivations the British people have also had to contend with a severe coal shortage this winter. It has been difficult to procure enough gas to cook their food properly. The coal shortage has also forced a drastic curtailment of train service. And to add to the gloom, signs and shop windows have to be blacked out. Moreover, a number of British doctors ascribe the severity of the current flu epidemic there to the lessening of bodily resistance due to lack of fats and proteins.

Why have the British proved willing to put up with extreme privation of this sort? Much of it could have been alleviated by dipping into the growing national gold reserve, by continuing to accept Marshall Plan aid and by borrowing from other sources. In that way adequate supplies of coal and of the vital foodstuffs normally imported from Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and Argentina would have reached the citizen.

But there are other things upon which the British apparently set greater store. They recognize that the loss of an empire has been a blow to the national economy; they conceive of themselves as engaged in a battle for survival. They have to "export or die" as a nation. Therefore in the past five years everything has been concentrated on production for export and a curtailment of imports in order in the end to arrive at a favorable trade balance. The pound was devalued and stabilized, and now British currency has an increasingly solid backing of mounting gold reserves. It has been possible to accomplish this only through drastic austerities.

At the same time, under a Labor Government, post-war Britain has embarked upon a comprehensive program of social services which has even extended to such details as the supplying of 100,000 hearing aids. By and large the British are not socialist in any doctrinaire fashion, but they seem willing to make great sacrifices to place adequate medical service and other social benefits within reach of all.

Now, on top of all this, the British people are called upon to rearm in the defense of the West. A good portion of the manufacturing facilities they had counted on to produce goods for export will now have to be given over to unproductive armament making. Somehow (and simultaneously) production of textiles and other light industries will have to be stepped up; imports will have to be held down to a minimum. A twenty per cent extra effort will be demanded of all, even as their diet thins out and austerities deepen. Once aroused the British people manifest a tremendous determination to resist.

### *Every Seven Days*

**T**HERE are these four pages of THE COMMONWEAL for the editorials every week, and every Tuesday something must be written by each

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## • NEXT WEEK •

NORBERT MUHLEN, who has only recently returned from Germany, contrasts the viewpoint of Pastor Niemoeller with that of his congregation in a Berlin suburb on the fringe of the Iron Curtain.

"With its deceptive facade of a happily restored old Germany, its American soldiers badly outnumbered by the Soviet soldiers around the corner, and its youthful refugee population which is certainly one of Europe's most freedom-pledged groups, the little Dahlem suburb presents in a showcase, as it were, the conflicting forces which keep Europe awake these nights. . . ."

of the full-time editors so that the pages say something when the magazine goes on the presses Wednesday night. That is the way it is here where there are only a few pages and a few people. It is different, of course, at *Time* or *Newsweek* where the operation is big-time, the staff is numerous and the issues are fat.

This magazine is one of the few remaining examples of personal journalism in New York. There has never been more than a handful involved in bringing it out every week. Recently even that small number was diminished.

Several of the present editors are veterans of World War II. And now Bill Pfaff, the youngest, is off doing Basic Training in South Carolina and no longer here to write about conscription and war and the defense of the West. You can't write about history from an island somewhere that is removed from the wear-and-tear of actual events. Sooner or later it moves into even the editorial sanctum.

There is certainly enough to write about, enough to keep forty men close to their typewriters every week. But when there are only a few pages, room enough for only a few topics, the possibilities are sometimes bewildering. You follow the news all week and when Tuesday rolls around you begin to feel like a man writing home after a day in the Uffizi gallery or the Vatican museum where there are altogether too many pictures. You begin to feel burdened as a child in a candy store forced to make a decision about spending his nickel. Plato held that actuality was the degradation of being—the Nestle bar, once it is paid for, irrevocably cancels out the wonders and richness of a tray full of sweets. That is somewhat what it is like to write an editorial every seventh day.

Once you have fastened on some issue, out of the hundreds you think about, talk about, investigate, argue about, evaluate and try to fit into the whole pattern of contemporary history—once you have made this decision and said what you want to say about the thing in the space allotted, you become acutely aware of the other topics you might have selected. During the course of a week, in an atmosphere like the present, a man comes across a thousand opinions in the newspaper columns, on the radio, in the magazines and in the books he reads. Even with transoceanic radio, on-the-spot television and multiple daily editions of the same newspaper, events move faster than reports. Things pile up from hour to hour and at the end of a week, or even at the end of a day, whole pictures change.

Right now there are three or four battlefields to keep an eye on, the daily sessions at Lake Success, the internal politics of a dozen countries, the diplomatic agreements between nations, the reports issuing from the military councils, the scientists' pow-wows, the religious conventions, the labor conclaves and the educational meetings, merely to skim the surface. To piece it all together, to make sense out of the hodge-podge grows more difficult all the time. The temptation to give up trying to grasp the meaning and logic of individual events is ever-increasing.

The alternative is to attempt to create a simplicity that doesn't really exist, to focus one's anger and frustration on a single cause, a single group or even a single man—Communism, perhaps, or the Fair Dealers, the reactionaries, the Jews, F.D.R., Truman, Dean Acheson. It doesn't matter particularly as long as the maddening complexity is removed. This is the temptation that the journalist—and not the journalist alone—is subject to when events pile up and his supposed omniscience, his sureness and authority are challenged. It is a temptation to be resisted as something from the devil.

Saroyan has a story about a man who regularly dropped an Open Letter to the World from skyscraper roof-tops. The man was unimportant and unknown. But even in the age of publishing monsters, huge and impersonal as aircraft factories, the man felt that it was a good thing for him to communicate how he felt about things.

When a COMMONWEAL editor reads the advertisements of the mass-circulation giants in the *Times* or the *Herald-Tribune* ("The 10,000,000-circulation Magazine is here"), he feels a little like the quixotic little man on the roof. Still Saroyan's point was that anyone is empowered to open a letter addressed to the world, and more people ought to write them.

### *Mild Freeze*

THE task of stemming an inflation that is almost out of hand is a complicated process. Evidence is mounting that the battle cannot be won without concerted action from every sector. And the main problem seems to be to convince the American people that enough is at stake to justify personal and group sacrifices.

The way prices and wages were "frozen" on January 26 provides very little assurance. Since most farm commodities, for instance, are below "parity," there is nothing to stop them from ris-

ing considerably further; these increases will be passed on to the consumer. So while "ceilings" were set at a record high point, they can go considerably higher.

This, in turn, will increase the pressure for universal wage increases, and Wage Stabilizer Cyrus Ching has intimated that upward adjustments will be in order. As production costs mount because of higher wages, manufacturers and processors will press for higher prices; the dizzy spiral of inflation will gain new momentum. The best the Administration will promise is to direct and restrain inflation. On this basis the outlook for the American dollar (and the family budget) is none too bright.

Moreover there are other factors in the equation: government credit policy and the supply of money. Here again the pressure is inflationary. Government securities are pegged high and the interest rate is held down to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The Federal Reserve keeps at member banks to load up on these "governments." Maintenance of the low interest rate encourages private borrowing at a time when it should be restrained, while sales of government bonds expand credit and the money in circulation at the very time the supply of goods is shrinking. To raise the interest rate as little as  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 per cent would increase government interest payments by a billion and a quarter a year, but it would be worth it to stem inflation. Higher taxes all round is one way to cut into this surplus money supply.

Firmer price and wage controls must coincide with improved government fiscal and credit policies if anything substantial is to be accomplished. And if statesmanship is called for on Washington's part, so the American people need to grasp the situation. Stabilizers are said to be held back by the fear that the public would not support controls severe enough to be effective. They say that the Russian threat to our national security is too indefinite in people's minds. They also feel that too few individuals or members of interested groups are aware enough of the havoc that would result if the dollar should drastically lose its value. Too few see what is at stake to forego pressing for what they conceive to be their own personal advantage.

### *Muddling Through*

IT IS NOW a little more than a year since Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communists took control of China and in that time there has

been a great deal of speculation about who Mao Tse-tung is, whether or not he is a potential Tito and what his general intentions are. There is, of course, plenty of reason for all this speculation, given the secretive ways of revolutionaries and given the quite logical possibility that, because of the deep-seated sources of conflict between China and Russia, relations between Mao Tse-tung and Stalin may not in the future be the picnic they appear to be now. But for the time being at least, Mao has left no room for doubt in our minds as to who he is and what he wants, and so it is a little strange that we have devoted so much time to speculating about him and so little time to a more important question, which is, What do we ourselves want in Asia?

As our armies in Korea near the 38th parallel again, the same series of questions presents itself to us once more: Do we intend to cross the 38th parallel? If so, are we prepared to carry on a **virtually endless war** with China? If not, are we prepared to negotiate with Communist China? To admit her to the UN? To cede Formosa to China if the UN so decides? We cannot at the moment answer these questions with any assurance because the United States has at the present time only the sketchiest of policies in the Pacific and we appear now to be so at odds with Britain over China policy that if China should decide to negotiate with us, she could quite easily split the Western alliance wide open, much to the delight of Moscow. While Britain has recognized Communist China and is prepared to admit her eventually to the UN, we have not recognized her and we seem emotionally set against ever admitting the Peiping Government to the UN, although we appear to have no legal precedent for this refusal and no means or desire to carry out the hostile implications of it. In regard to Formosa, Britain is willing to let the UN settle the fate of that island; although we too were prepared to do this a year ago, today no one seems to know just where we stand on the matter.

In short, Western policy in the Pacific is still pretty much of a muddle and it seems to us that one of the principal reasons for this is that our own country is unable to make up its mind about what it wants to do in China. For the present, of course, as long as the Chinese armies continue their aggression in Korea, we have no choice of action and the Russians are quite obviously bent on keeping things that way. But if we are ever to have a Pacific policy worth the name, then we cannot forever remain on the defensive, we cannot go on letting events shape our course of

action without ourselves exerting an affirmative influence in the Far East.

If we are to act with purpose there, we must first decide what we want to do regarding China: do we intend to block Communist China's admission to the UN permanently and carry out the hostile and very probably belligerent implications of this, or do we intend to admit Communist China to the UN while we work there with our allies on a long-range policy of dividing China from Russia?

Neither of these alternatives is an altogether promising one, but since we are physically unable to carry out the first policy without draining off our resources to a point of utter futility and thus jeopardizing the security of Europe, it would seem only logical to set out on the second course of action. Yet as things stand now, it is very doubtful that this could be done because this policy has not been made clear and reasonable to the public mind in the United States and it will therefore be assailed as appeasement.

It is, then, the very worst kind of dilemma we are caught in now in Asia. We will have to begin to work our way out of that dilemma soon, and when we do, it would seem to us a wise thing to keep in mind one general principle: we will never go anywhere in Asia and we will never accomplish anything there unless we do it with and through the Asiatic peoples themselves. Right now, we have only a few friends left in Asia and we submit that their number will not increase if we decide now to bomb and burn the Chinese people and their country.

### *First Japanese Freighter*

FOR THE FIRST time in nearly ten years a Japanese freighter has entered New York harbor. The Arimusan Maru is a green-hulled vessel of 8,700 tons and there is something very symbolic about her career. She last left here for Japan in July, 1941, with a cargo of general merchandise and scrap iron. During the war she served as a hospital ship and was the only one of the Mitsui Company's fleet of thirty-three vessels to survive.

For the present the Arimusan Maru has to remain a tramp steamer. Regular service cannot be reestablished until the conclusion of a peace treaty. This is but one reason why such a treaty is needed now to rebuild the Japanese economy and help stabilize conditions in Asia.

# The British View of U. S. Policy

Having as big a stake in Western policy as any other country, Britain asks only the right to be heard.

By MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

MANY of us in England, as we read the reports of American opinion regarding Korea and China which reach us through our press, have the sort of feeling that comes to me in the car when my wife is driving. We are indeed united for better or worse, until death do us part. But I sometimes wonder, as she sets her jaw and bounds from a by-road across a main highway, whether it may not really be for worse, and death nearer than we think.

Those of us whose memories go back to the Abyssinia affair are of course delighted to hear of the American people filled with the sort of idealism which swept through this country in the face of Fascist aggression; the idealism which involves actually taking a gun and going forth to shoot the aggressor. And we are not much worried by the siren warnings (air-raid variety) of the fellow-travelers, or by reflections on the moral character of Mr. Syngman Rhee. By the side of the Addis Ababa so picturesquely, and not inaccurately, painted by Evelyn Waugh in *Black Mischief*, even Rhee's government will pass muster; and we (I mean people of my political way of thinking) were quite prepared to fight for the Emperor of Ethiopia. We have since then ended a war in which two of our chief allies were Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek, and are preparing to fight the next in the company of Tito, Franco, and various colorful characters from South of the Mexican border. Aggression is aggression, who or whatever the victim may be.

We are also prepared to blush, and even more redly (since face must be saved) in private than in public, when reminded that our contribution to the present Atlantic war effort is miserably small. I am not sure which nation, on its record of the last five years, has the right to cast the first stone. But, however that may be, most of us in England, whatever our political party, are heartily ashamed of our failure to spend more on defense sooner. We are still more ashamed of the fact that, after actually spending several million

pounds since 1945, we have still apparently only a diminutive fighting army to show for it.

What worries us are American conceptions (or alleged conceptions—I am speaking of our press reports) of the political strategy to be applied to our present troubles; particularly when backed by references to America's bearing the brunt of the war in the Far East. America is doing nothing of the sort. In one theatre of that war, Korea, American troops predominate. But there is also a second major theatre, Indo-China, a secondary theatre, Malaya, and armed non-belligerency on a third frontier, that of Hong Kong. In all of these the strain is being taken by divisions from Europe. If the efforts of individual nations are compared by any of the obvious tests—men engaged, or casualties, in proportion to population, or expenditure on Far Eastern operations as a percentage of national income—Great Britain does not come so far behind the United States, and I suspect, though I have not the figures by me, that France comes far ahead of either.

★

AND there is another sense in which countries can be said to bear the brunt of an operation of this sort; and in this case by far the heaviest weight is falling on Europe. The enemies of collective security used to remind us in 1935 that if we fought Italy over Abyssinia we were not merely risking defeat by Italy, a worse disaster to collective security than if nothing was done at all; we were also taking our eyes off the main front where the chief aggressor at that date, Hitler, was already preparing to strike.

Today there is again a main prospective aggressor, not directly involved in the actual case of aggression before us. There is again a main target which is not that against which the present aggression is directed. The main target is the industrial power of Western Europe. If the Far East were lost, the West would still be defensible. But how long could the Far East be defended against a power based not only on Moscow or the Urals (the last time, these were on our side) but on Birmingham and the Ruhr? And this time there is nothing but the moral force of the atom bomb, plus a few small armies mainly committed in the East, to stand in the main aggressor's way.

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MICHAEL P. FOGARTY, now of Nuffield College, Oxford, has held various executive positions in the Labor Party and in Catholic social organizations in England.

The strain of this risk does not fall on people ~~against~~ whom Communist attacks must proceed mainly by sea and air, the elements Communism is weakest in. It falls on those of whom a Belgian girl, returning after a long stay in England, wrote to me a few days ago—as a conversational remark, not as a comment on politics—that “everyone is dancing and going to parties before the Russians arrive.”

★

I DO NOT mean that the British, or indeed any of the other leading nations of Western Europe, want to pull out of collective security. But we do feel that we have as big a stake, and as good a right to a voice, in what is going on as any other country. And we are inclined to emphasize that the Christian doctrine of the Just War requires not merely a just and sufficient cause but—war being the horror it is, and something not to be entered into lightly—a reasonable chance of success. We know that success is to be measured in moral as well as material terms, and therefore are prepared to fight if necessary even against heavy odds. We recognize, in particular, that once an aggressor starts shooting it is necessary to shoot back. But when it is a case, not merely of driving the criminal off from his objective, but of hunting him down in his own home or rounding up his backers—specifically, of crossing the 38th parallel or bombarding the mainland of China—it is right to look first at the balance of forces. There is nothing wrong in the police thus taking the initiative against a proved criminal. But will they please, we would insist, make sure first that by doing so they will not let loose seven devils worse than the first?

We in Britain see the issue of branding China as an aggressor in the light partly of this and partly of another consideration. In the parts of Asia where shooting is actually going on, the Chinese are already being fought by the United Nations and the French. If branding China as an aggressor meant simply recognizing this existing fact, we would be perfectly happy. But does it? Does it open the way to the sort of initiative by the United Nations ground forces which we, in the present world balance of power, would regard as highly dangerous? Does it mean closing such avenues of negotiation, however narrow, as still remain? We have not as many illusions about Chinese Communism and its alleged tendency to follow the path of Tito as is sometimes thought. But we did live through some uneasy years from 1939 to 1941 when the USSR and Spain were backing Hitler by every means short of armed force. The USSR at one time actually committed open aggression in which, had the Finns held out longer, we would have been actively involved on the other side. We learned

then that there is an infinite series of steps from neutrality through non-belligerency to war, and that when one is weak a non-belligerent enemy, or one belligerent only in a restricted area, is a great deal better than an enemy advancing in all-out war.

We have also—though I do not frankly attach too much importance to this—been worried over the gap in our own moral position created by the failure, long before Chinese troops moved into Korea, to bring the Peking Government to Lake Success. Communist the Peking Government certainly is. But unless we are prepared to exclude all other Communist Governments from the UN, what case have we for shutting out China? Two blacks do not make a white, and none of us would seriously claim that a temporary political slight of this kind justified the Chinese in aggressive war; nor that they can properly be brought to Lake Success till the aggression is ended. But it has been a good talking-point for fellow-travelers, and has tied up regrettably well with the suspicion that America tends to talk tough to China irrespective of the results for the rest of the world.

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TURNING for a moment to the more peaceful side of defense, we are busily debating, like most of the rest of the world, what the cost will be in terms, not only of the standard of living now, but of prospective standards in the next couple of generations. The tepid war (if that is the right word for the hot and cold tap running simultaneously) shows every sign of lasting out our lifetimes; even should it turn into nothing worse. I have an uneasy feeling that we shall face its cost in England, at least in the first stages, by cuts all round; in consumption, home capital investment, and perhaps even investment in the underdeveloped countries. If we do, it will be disastrous. Cuts in civil investment mean a much slower increase, if any, in productivity and incomes; and I am fairly sure that it is not possible, in our present and immediately prospective Western culture, with the expectation it arouses, to run an advanced economy without social disturbance unless consumer incomes are rising at the one to two per cent per annum rate experienced in the advanced capitalist countries in the past. And British investment in underdeveloped countries, particularly in our own colonies, is even now far less—or even prospectively, under the Colombo Plan—than is needed to keep pace with the rising tide of population, to say nothing of the faster rising tide of the colonial peoples' expectations. If we cut the Colombo Plan, we play straight into Communist hands.

The answer is I believe twofold. For one thing, we might for once take a lesson from

Russia. Let us take our cuts at the start mainly in consumption; and let them be so big that thereafter consumption can rise steadily, even though from a low level, while still leaving enough over for defense and further investment. And secondly, must we assume that the wasteful cultures of the Western countries will remain as they are forever? Among the characteristics of Toynbee's creative minorities, those minorities whom others admire and freely follow, is style in living. This is compounded of two apparent opposites; the asceticism of the craftsman, stripping away all that is unessential, and the old medieval virtue of magnificence, the capacity on occasion to do the big thing in a big way. Is that how we live in the West; or is it not true that to the eye of, say, a Japanese, there is an appalling amount of waste in our economies, unbalanced by much of the moralist's "magnificence"?

There is a remarkably large luxury element, in Britain, even by working class standards. I say nothing of drink or tobacco; but take food. An official committee of scientists estimated in 1940, for the strictly practical purpose of a siege economy, that the British people could be fed, at a level sufficient to maintain full health and working efficiency, at about half the cost of the diet actually eaten in the worst war years. It would have meant a revolution in agriculture and feeding habits. But it could have been done; and that exactly illustrates my point. Are we entering an era when the old Christian doctrine of poverty will come back into its own; when men have to recognize their duty to limit consumption to what they actually need, and to scrutinize their needs—a social process, since one man's needs depend largely on the social standards set for him—to make sure that they really are essential?

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WESTERN Europe has already gone a long way down that path so far as the upper and middle classes are concerned. It is easy enough to see how necessary this was, and how neglect of the traditional Christian doctrine undermined these classes' leadership within their own countries and paved the way for the Marxist agitator who, whatever his faults, does not—this side of the Iron Curtain—live on the fat of the land. Are we coming to a time when the European working class in its turn must apply this doctrine, in order not only to make its income cover its new expenditures but to consolidate (should one say restore, or even create?) its moral leadership among similar classes in the rest of the world? I can only say that in my own experience this line of thought is now at long last, thanks to recent events, beginning to find an echo in, at any rate, a few Labor circles. From there to Cabinet policy is, however, a very long step.

FROM ITALY

## *No Port in the Storm*

THE Communist line all over Europe at this time can be summed up about as follows: on the surface is the propaganda for peace, which, of course, costs nothing, and underneath is the firm conviction that war, whatever its outcome, will improve the Communist position, since its destruction and misery will be so terrible that even in the event of an allied victory, the situation will breed even more Communism than the last war did. As an example they cite Korea, where the Communist guerrillas have been a terrible nuisance to the UN troops, and remain so even after the Chinese intervention.

But if you ask these Communists what they mean by victory, their reply boils down to something quite different from what is usually meant by this word. Even the most fanatic optimists among them do not hope for more than a Russian advance to Gibraltar and Suez, with Russia controlling the Middle East, India and Indo-China—that is, practically all of Eurasia—in alliance with the Chinese. They recognize that geography and the military strength of the Western allies might stop the Russians there.

On the other hand, after what has happened in Korea, the most optimistic anti-Communists in Europe do not hope for more than that the Russians will be pushed back into their own country, eventually along the same line that the German General Staff tried to establish from the White Sea to the Caspian or along any other possible natural line between this and the ideal Communist Gibraltar-Suez line. Nobody seems to hope any more for a crushing Russian defeat and one of the reasons for this which is often heard is that Communist underground resistance movements are bound to harass the allied communication lines; Communist undergrounds have proved to be more efficient than the anti-Communist undergrounds, with whom the Russian troops will have to cope.

★

THUS the question appears to be not who is going to win the war, which is so often considered unavoidable, but who is finally going to occupy Europe. And here another factor comes up, namely, the widespread opinion that since the last war, although progress in offensive and particularly defensive weapons has been amazing, it has largely followed the same lines on both sides. The conclusion one draws from this is that the deadlock of the first world war might well reappear in the next for long periods of time, with all the terrible destruction this will mean for the countries where the deadlocks occur.

Before the outbreak of war in Korea many observers

in Europe were quite hopeful that Titoism might spread among the Russian satellites, with the most unexpected political and military consequences. There is no doubt that Titoism is the greatest danger that has as yet menaced the Eastern world from within. During my stay in Yugoslavia last year, this was confirmed in conversations I had with numerous Communist refugees from the surrounding countries. But as the Yugoslav case has proved, Titoism develops best in peaceful circumstances and could hardly have taken place after the outbreak of a war, or even now.

The prospects of a coming conflict have tended to develop selfish considerations, at the expense of ideals, among the peoples most directly menaced. As it approaches, war does not appear to them any more as a struggle between good and evil, between democracy and the totalitarian terror of Communism. It does not even appear any more to many people as a choice between two evils, American imperialism and Russian imperialism, as they put it, with American imperialism considered the lesser of the two. It appears to them as being a cataclysm, like an earthquake or a typhoon, blind and terrible with no possible solution in terms of a better world. One doesn't take sides in a typhoon, one just tries to take a safe shelter. Countries like Sweden and Switzerland, which have decided to try the neutral way and have been criticized for it formerly, are envied now as the psychosis of war spreads. Even though neutrality is impossible for most countries in Europe, the man in the street is developing an increasing neutral-mindedness.

★

**H**AVING the biggest Communist party outside the Iron Curtain, the Italians have very little confidence in the future. This lack of confidence is strangely combined, though, with a characteristic carelessness, which is quite optimistic in spite of all. It is a carelessness which was one of the reasons for Italy's disasters during the last war, but which helped its people to survive and rebuild again with surprising rapidity. This mixture is a weakness and a strength at the same time, possibly the reaction of an ancient race to the innumerable invasions which have rolled over its territory throughout the centuries. Why should a Russian invasion be so different from all other earlier invasions? And if they conquer Italy, why shouldn't they in their turn be conquered by her beauty and her easy way of life and become more moderate?

It is possible to hear that sort of argument in Italy now, but it does not mean that the people, at least the anti-Communists among them, are indifferent to the prospect of a Russian occupation. From that point of view, Yugoslavia's about-face is considered by many Italians as providential. Italy's weakest spot is thus covered by one of the most militarized and toughest nations in Europe and if only Tito remains in power, Italy could not have dreamed of a better shield, where she most needed it. The opposed claims between the two countries concerning Trieste and its different zones lose most of their importance due to the fact that the Yugo-

slav divisions are defending Italy's open gate to the East at the same time that they are defending themselves. Even if the outbreak of war should set off a civil war in Yugoslavia between Cominform Communists and Tito Communists, or if there should be a short period of non-belligerence, this would be of great advantage to Italy, allowing her to gain precious time.

Her northern boundaries are easy to defend, based as they are on the Alps, and all along them old fortifications are being readied. It is the same line built at the beginning of the alliance between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany and baptized at the time the "I-don't-trust-you-line."

If this line should be made worthless through a Yugoslav collapse or for some other reason, many Italians have a certain confidence in the German-built so-called Gothic line, based on the chain of the Apennines. Last autumn a part of the Italian armed forces went on maneuvers in the area in order to test it, and the result was considered satisfactory. But this line has the disadvantage of running across Tuscany and Emilia, which are the Reddest provinces in the country and the defense of it might be terribly hampered by Communist sabotage.

★

**T**HEN there is a third and last continental line Italians think of, when they try to determine what will be the safest part of the country in case of war, and it is based on the Abruzzi mountains south of Rome, where the Germans made their first successful stand after the Allied landing in Salerno.

But all these defensive plans are minimized by the man in the street because of the uncertain possibilities of checking the ever-present Communist sabotage and this gives him the unpleasant feeling that only a miracle could save Italy from the same fate as Korea. That's why he has no confidence in the future—at the same time that he keeps on hoping optimistically for the miracle.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

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## Catholic Book Week

**F**EBRUARY 18 to 24 marks the annual celebration of Catholic Book Week in the United States. The February 23 issue of *THE COMMONWEAL* will offer a list, based on publishers' suggestions, of current Catholic books. Gerald Vann, author of *Morals Maketh Man*, *The Divine Pity* and other books, contributes an article entitled "The Problems of Catholic Journalism." Father Vann focuses his attention on the differences between the viewpoint on the news taken by those concerned with eternal values and that of journalists wholly concerned with the temporal. In the same issue, Norbert Muhlen's "Pastor Niemoeller and His Flock" stresses the contrast between the current political views of the famous Lutheran anti-Nazi and those of his congregation in the Berlin suburb of Dahlem.

## The Catholic Press

**W**E CATHOLICS like to console ourselves with the thought that here in America the Church has sprung from the poor and underprivileged.

"Look," we tell anyone who will listen, "over 90% of our people are either humble immigrants or the descendants of poor working-class folk who came here to find jobs and food. Most of them are still workers. How could we ever forget the poor? How could we ever ally ourselves with the rich and powerful against the working class?" And so we draw our humble origins up around our necks and feel warm and secure against the cold winds of revolution.

If our people are mostly workers, you would never know it from reading the average diocesan Catholic weekly. A man from Mars reading it would have to conclude that the Church in America is composed mostly of priests, pious women, book lovers, movie fans, wealthy businessmen, Young People, sports fans and Roosevelt-haters.

A few years ago I was working for a Catholic labor paper and we used to get most of the diocesan weeklies. This morning I went through a large pile of recent issues. The situation seems to be about the same today as it was when I was reading them regularly.

Of those I read, one-third run a column or other material that could be said to be of interest to working men as working men. The column is either by Father George Higgins or by some local priest who is an expert on labor questions. Father Higgins is assistant director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference and might therefore be said to be theologically bonded and safe. He writes an interesting, readable column which is syndicated through the NCWC news service and is therefore available to all at reasonable rates. But most of our Catholic editors don't want it. I wonder why.

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after justice," said Our Lord. And again: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." They may not be able to get any space in the local Catholic paper, but theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

★

**T**HE Popes have repeatedly made the statement, and our Bishops have underlined it, that the social question is one of the key questions of modern times. In concluding his great encyclical "On Reconstructing the Social Order" Pius XI made this appeal: "Therefore let all men of good will . . . strive according to the talent, powers and position of each to contribute something to the Christian reconstruction of human society

. . ." I wonder if the editor of the average diocesan Catholic weekly believes that he has answered this appeal and done his bit by an occasional editorial applauding Senator McCarthy's campaign to rid the administration of Communists.

In the back of the Missal it says, between the lists of the seven deadly sins and the nine ways of being accessory to another's sin, that the four sins which cry to heaven for vengeance are: 1. Wilful murder. 2. The sin of Sodom. 3. Oppression of the poor. 4. Defrauding the laborer of his hire.

I think that if murder and sodomy were being committed in public places and going unpunished, our Catholic papers would speak out loud and clear against such an outrage. But the third and fourth sins are committed every day, some of them by prominent citizens and some of them by prominent Catholics. And the average diocesan Catholic weekly does not utter a word in protest. Why?

Many Catholic editors feel that this is not a proper field for their investigations or comment because it is too temporal, complex, political, subject to violent prejudices and differences of opinion. This would be a convincing argument if it were not for the fact that some of the same editors who use it demonstrate the most daring courage and enterprise in denouncing popular politicians who have been friendly to labor. I mean men like Roosevelt and Truman.

These editors are apparently not concerned that many, if not most, of the Catholics in their dioceses either supported or support these men. In a sense they should not be. I applaud their courage. To them it seems that it is their Christian duty to denounce Roosevelt and Truman and Acheson and Marshall and the rest of the New Deal-Fair Deal crowd.

★

**T**HIS is perhaps cause for hope. What we need then is not so much courage as more knowledge. If our editors would spend more time studying the Gospels and the encyclicals and less time reading Pegler and listening to Fulton Lewis, Jr., perhaps it would make a big difference in the Catholic press. If more editors read I won't say *THE COMMONWEAL*, but *America* or *The Labor Leader* or *The Sign* or *Today* or *Work* or Cardinal Suhard, and if fewer of them read John O'Donnell, then perhaps we would see more of the workers, which means more Catholics, reading their papers.

I do not suggest that these editors should be praising Roosevelt and Truman. It is not necessary to praise anyone. As a practicing journalist I am well aware how much easier and more pleasant it is to denounce than to praise. But if they would concentrate on denouncing a few of the more serious injustices in our society, if they would denounce the local slums and the men responsible for them, if they would denounce some of the local aspects of racial discrimination, if they would only denounce the more obvious hypocrisy in the neighborhood, then I think people would begin to take their papers seriously. I think that then people would read them,

and especially that the workers who make up the blood and bones and treasury of the American Church would read them and be better and more loyal Catholics for having read them.

A few months back there was a strike in our city in the Liggetts chain drug stores. The girls and men who worked there were on their feet 48 hours a week, six days a week, working for miserable wages so that this large corporation could wax fat. So they walked out. And they stayed out, for weeks and weeks. The company brought in strikebreakers and in the end the strike was lost.

Most of the people in our city are Catholics. I would like to believe that all the people whom I saw passing the picket lines to enter Liggetts during that strike were non-Catholics, but somehow I can't bring myself to believe it. Here was a question of conscience. If it was not formal sin, certainly it was material sin. It was going on all over the city. It will go on again and is doubtless going on now in some more obscure retail store strike.

I couldn't help thinking that here would have been a splendid story to feature on the front page of our local Catholic paper. It could have been a prudent story, giving statements from both sides, careful to do justice to all parties as any Christian should. It might have been accompanied by an editorial pointing out some of the moral issues involved, particularly as regards the passing or not passing of picket lines.

★

THE average Catholic editor will say that this is none of his affair. Perhaps not. But if not, then let's go all the way and admit that the Hitlers and Mussolinis and Stalins are right and that religion should stay in the sanctuary and not go meddling in the affairs of the world. At the very least spare us the Republican propaganda. Give us the news about the new monsignori, the date of the next meeting of the Women's Sodality, the Question Box, the edifying editorial on Lent, and let it go at that. If we can't "contribute something to the Christian reconstruction of society," at least let's not help tear it down.

To that minority of Catholic editors who have opened their pages to the poor and the things that concern the poor I say, "Thank God for men like you, for it is upon such men as you that the health of the Church in America depends."

JOHN C. CORT.

*Correction:* A few weeks back I wrote a column about the Massachusetts cio convention. After discussing it with an official of the state cio I would like to strike out such extreme expressions as "shattering experience" and "fiasco." It wasn't that bad. It was bad, but not that bad. Nor do I believe now that the unity slate was solely the work of two men. Things were a little more complicated at Springfield than I indicated.

J.C.C.

## The Stage

### PEER GYNT

IT OCCURS to me that "Peer Gynt" is one of the booby traps of dramatic literature. At first sight it offers actor and audience an enthralling range of subject matter and emotion: Peer the poet inventing tall tales of his exploits; Peer the renegade stealing another man's bride; Peer the libertine consorting with troll girls in the mountains; Peer the innocent chastely accepting Solveig as a child-wife; Peer the son comforting his mother at her death; Peer the adventurer plundering two continents; Peer the madman crowned Emperor of lunacy; Peer the fugitive evading his fate at the hands of the Button-Moulder; Peer the penitent falling at last into Solveig's arms. It sounds good. The actor imagines himself encompassing this range and somehow providing a unity for it all. The hopeful audience imagines itself regaled with music, spectacle, fantasy, pathos, and satire. All of the good things of the theatre seem about to be employed, and all of them turn out to be disconcertingly empty. We are astonished at how dull our most prized theatrical values can be.

The trouble with "Peer Gynt" is that it is dead at the heart. Peer is not a character at all, only an idea, and neither a very attractive nor very clear idea at that. Essentially he is a symbol of self-sufficiency, and his supposed tragedy is that of the man who would protect his own integrity by refusing to share any part of himself with anyone else. The symbolism is confused, however, by the fact that Peer has no integrity to begin with, has nothing particular in mind. We meet him as a wastrel and a liar. Though he talks about himself, and insists upon the esteem in which he holds himself, there is never any self worth caring about. Normally we would dramatize the tragedy of a self-sufficient man by giving him qualities worth having and worth sharing. But there is really nothing in Peer that we can imagine anyone else wanting, and Solveig's coming to him is as inexplicable as her long waiting for him is foolish. When the Button-Moulder finally tells him, some three hours after our own patience has ebbed, that he never was anything but a lump to be melted down, we are in strong agreement, having suspected it from the first. Furthermore, the interim attempt to make this nonentity attractive by providing him with a randomly poetic imagination only increases our irritation: we feel that we are expected to like him because he is vaguely poetic, but we *don't* like him because he is selfish and worthless at the same time. It is precisely Ibsen's point that the self-sufficient man is nothing, but the effort of looking at nothing for three hours can be wearing.

The play is necessarily static. Peer, the idea, cannot grow; he can only be exposed, over and over again, in a series of varied but repetitive incidents. The fact that

some of the incidents are fantastic and some realistic hurts more than it helps; the two styles are alternated rather than blended, and we are constantly struggling to get our bearings. Even so, with all the defects of the play and in spite of the fact that even its virtues are random rather than integrated, it does have some virtues: it has isolated moments of poetry and passages of effective satire. It is an increasingly gloomy duty to have to report that the present production botches both.

The poetry is destroyed by John Garfield's performance, which is one of mumbling and monotonous realism, and the satire is lost in Lee Strasberg's literal and unpointed stage direction. Whatever possessed Mr. Garfield to suppose that he could perform every scene of a flighty and flamboyant play in the same introspective and untheatrical key, I cannot imagine; he has either been badly advised or is simply unaware of the difference between a realistic and a heroic performance. He is of course suffering from the same difficulty that pursued Louis Calhern throughout "King Lear"; both of them are fine actors but neither has been trained beyond realism. Calhern, however, at least seemed to know what was demanded of him and to try to realize it. When the play rose in intensity, he shouted. Garfield makes no effort at all, seems really to believe that nothing more is called for than a quiet self-communion. The satire of the play is normally at its best in the Cairo scene, a scene of sufficient wit to fill the theatre with laughter; Mr. Strasberg's treatment of it has permitted a few giggles to stray through from the unaided script.

Directorially, the production is everywhere without rhythmic feeling. Valerie Bettis' dances impede rather than accelerate the action, scenes involving more than three or four people are cluttered and awkward, and Donald Oenslager's ingenious and independently attractive settings add a further weight to the production. I am more and more of the opinion that our mechanical ingenuity is a liability, since it tempts and permits producers to put more on the stage than is good for the play. Had the individual scenes of the play been gathering any momentum of their own, that momentum would probably not have survived the pauses during which the stage was being revolved and re-mounted. (*At the ANTA Playhouse.*)

#### THE D'OYLY CARTE COMPANY

MARTYN GREEN and friends are paying us another, and for my money, overdue visit in their Gilbert and Sullivan repertory, and I doubt that anyone will have to be urged to see them. Mr. Green is a genuine clown, of which there are too few left, and it is a great pleasure to watch him walk the delicate line between letting Gilbert's wit speak for itself and warming our hearts with his own improvisation. Martyn Green is one of the treats of our time, and is no more to be missed than the twenty-minute "Amy" number which Ray Bolger is now doing in "Where's Charley?" After all, you have to have something to tell your children about.

Darrell Fancourt is again on hand and in fine form, and the organization has a fine new tenor in Neville Griffiths. On the debit side, if there is one, is a general lack of animation in the chorus, and a surprising tendency toward unintelligibility among minor members of the company. This last is not so much a matter of slovenly diction on their parts as a need to be reminded, after all these performances, of what the lines *mean*. (*At the St. James.*)

#### RICHARD II

MAURICE EVANS concluded this season's series of revivals at the City Center by refurbishing his first great success in this country, and it seemed to me to be better than ever. We have grown accustomed to Mr. Evans and to his particular virtues; we have also seen him in parts to which he was less well suited and have become aware of his limitations. "Richard II" not only restored him to the most congenial of his roles, but renewed our own sense of the contribution he has made to poetic speech and acting in this country. He may sing too much, but he sings. He clearly possesses the training which Mr. Calhern and Mr. Garfield lack. (*Closed at City Center.*)

WALTER KERR.

## The Screen

#### IT'S A LONG, LONG WHILE

THERE are times when a reviewer's job is not the easiest in the world—especially when he has to consider a film like "September Affair." This handsomely made movie has a plot that tries to eat its cake and have it too. Its story, reminiscent of "Intermezzo" and several others, is concerned with the love affair between an unmarried woman and a married man who has left his wife to think things over. They meet in Italy, set up a love nest in a villa near Florence and are idyllically happy—for a while. Then the woman, a pianist preparing for a New York concert, realizes that the man, an engineer, misses his son and the factory he built up during the past 16 years. Later when his wife offers him a divorce, the man and the woman go to New York; and the realization hits them both that their happiness was built on deception: both have ties to which they must return. After a successful New York concert, the woman goes on to South America; the man goes to his family.

While the conclusion to this September affair is in keeping with the thinking of morally responsible adults, the major part of the film follows the pattern of carefree, irresponsible lovers on a binge. And the build-up is as romantic as visualized fiction can get. Hal Wallis has given the picture a beautiful production with lovely shots of Rome and Naples and Italian countryside; and Joan Fontaine and Joseph Cotten play the leads with feeling

and understanding of the problems involved. Although Director William Dieterle lets Robert Thoenen's script get a little too cute at times and lets some of the photography take on the quality of a travelogue, he never allows his leading players to act like kids in the throes of puppy love. Even more lush than the setting is the music, especially Kurt Weill's "September Song," which takes over nostalgically as the theme for this romantic, not-so-young pair who realize that the days *are* dwindling "down to a precious few."

In contrast to the loving Joan and Joe, are the crisp performances of Françoise Rosay, as Joan's piano teacher, who disapproves thoroughly of the whole love-nest arrangement, and Jessica Tandy, as Joe's wife, who is hurt and perplexed by her husband's conduct. On the whole "September Affair" is a thoughtful, adult film and should hold your interest. On an intellectual level, the key to the picture is given when one of the lovers says, "It isn't our fault that we met; but it's our fault if we stay together." But on an emotional basis, the key is in Kurt Weill's tuneful song; and I'll bet you come away singing it.

★

YOU may come away from "*The Second Woman*" properly frightened as you're supposed to be—especially if you scare easy and can get all wrapped up in a plot that is a little too crowded with coincidence for belief. Actually Mort Briskin has given Robert Smith's original story a good production; and Director James Kern lets his well-chosen cast do their best to keep you in a mood of eerie suspense. The story is one of those strange affairs (like "Rebecca" and "Suspicion") about an architect to whom just everything is happening, and he is sure he's the victim of continuing bad luck. Comes a girl (Betsy Drake) into the life of this suffering defeatist (Robert Young) and she, being a professional statistician, tries to persuade him that he's really the victim of some malevolent person. This is the kind of a movie about which it is unfair for a critic to tell too much. There are plenty of interesting people in the supporting cast who can be high up on your list of suspects as you watch one scarey event after another. And the well-lighted production has plenty of props that are designed to keep your nerves on edge. Outside of one flaw in the plot development (which an architect pointed out to me, and which a layman probably wouldn't even notice) "*The Second Woman*" is a thriller well above the average. It won't make history, but it will make goose pimples.

★

DESIGNED for this same purpose is "*Cause For Alarm!*" but I'm afraid its heroine's unorthodox behavior will wear you out more than provide you with thrills. The idea that Director Tay Garnett started with in this little item is really swell: a wife discovers her dying husband thinks that she and his doctor are in love and trying to kill him off. What's more the husband has written to the D.A. telling him the whole story. Immed-

iately after the unsuspecting wife gives this letter to the postman, the husband accuses her of all kinds of awful things and then ups and dies. Then the poor wife goes into a panic, does everything wrong and only succeeds in adding evidence after evidence to substantiate her husband's accusations. If this story had been made into a half-hour short, it might have been able to hold its audience. As it now drags on and on, you find yourself laughing in the wrong places. And as sympathetic as you are for Loretta Young, you can hardly stand watching her make even one more silly mistake. The supporting cast includes Barry Sullivan, Margalo Gilmore and Bruce Cowling; but it's really Loretta who has cause for alarm. And you hope her next picture has more substance and less tomfoolery.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

## Communications

### *Modern War*

London, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITORS: I was very much interested in your discussion with Dorothy Day *re* the Christian attitude towards war (THE COMMONWEAL, Dec. 29). But reading a few lines showed that there could be no grounds for arbitration between you and Miss Day, because you spoke different languages. You each had a set of ethics but these ethics were completely alien one to the other. The most that could be accomplished by your meeting was a statement of position. There could be no persuasion or compromise.

For that reason I should like to bring up a few points which have little to do with the absolute moral position of complete pacifism, and which are concerned with reason, not with faith, as was Miss Day. I shall state right here that I am in solid agreement with her, but I shall try to keep as far as possible from propositions where faith is concerned, inasmuch as Miss Day has already expressed that point of view so lucidly.

First, I should like to expand a term which you used more than once in defining your stand. You say, for instance, that "the us and all free nations have a duty to repel aggression." Okay. But what is involved in that action, "to repel aggression"? Its off-hand appearance in the press leads us to picture a football team on its own goal line, faced with a team that outweighs it twenty pounds per player. Or, if you want something a little more bloody, the tingling description of the Battle of Hastings as described by Hope Muntz in *The Golden Warrior*: the grass slippery with gore, the groans and shrieks of the dying and maimed cutting the air.

But that is not modern war. Not at all. In fact, the term "repel aggression" is today meaningless. Or, at best, its meaning is entirely different from what it was even 25 years ago. As recently as the First World War, to "repel aggression" meant that two armies advanced

towards each other and clashed. And the war was decided by that clash of armed forces.

Is that what it means today? Of course not. Today, to "repel aggression" means to destroy the enemy's country: to slaughter indiscriminately men, women and children, soldiers and civilians, to render useless his natural resources, to smash his industries, his public utilities, his dams, bridges and reservoirs, to pound his cities to rubble, to smash, to destroy, to kill, unconditionally and completely. This is the aim of modern war: destruction. Not of the armed forces of the enemy, but of *the enemy*. The enemy has ceased to be the traditional man with a sword. Today, the enemy means anything, literally anything, behind a certain frontier. Everything, literally everything, behind that frontier is to be destroyed.

What seems to me to be so vastly ignored today, as far as its results are concerned, is that *war is different*. Its difference is so appalling and overwhelming that it is in essence a new social influence. History is full of war as a major influence in the collapse of civilizations. But whereas the Peloponnesian and Punic wars were long, exhausting affairs, in which the calculated savagery and deliberate atrocities were rather the result of a steady decay of civilized values, owing to the ever-increasing and amoral pressure of war, today this calculated savagery, these deliberate atrocities are a part of war. In the past they were a result of war. Today they *are* war. . . .

The truth is, as Aldous Huxley pointed out in his *Grey Eminence*, that war is not merely an extension of certain international policies. It is a policy, an end in itself. This is true today more than ever before. Of course, that is not the way it starts. We start with a noble set of aims and intentions. But these aims—to "save civilization," to "preserve democracy," etc., at best fuzzy abstractions—are gradually replaced by the sole aim of destroying the enemy. If we had truly had far-sighted concern for the welfare of humanity, would the atom bomb have been used at Hiroshima? . . .

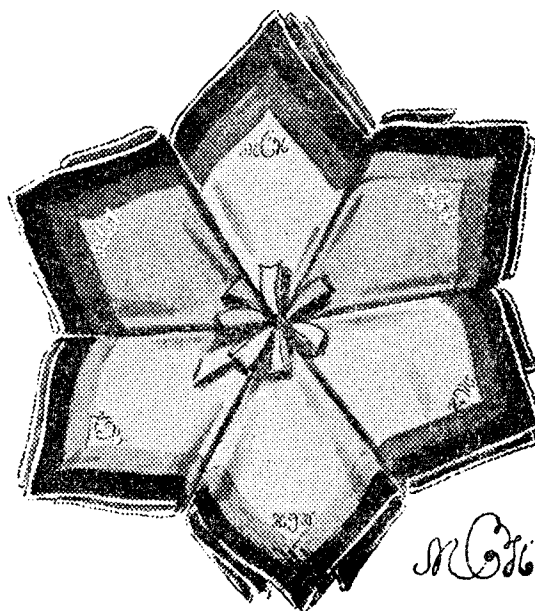
Perhaps you are willing to admit that the use of the Bomb was a mistake. But what is to prevent the recurrence of such "mistakes"? For this is what makes modern war the holocaust that it is: no effort is made to control it. No one knows how widely it will spread or what terrible new weapon will explode. We still do not know the long-range effect of atomic explosions on human life, yet we are at present planning to use the Bomb, in quantity, just as soon as the UN gives its approval. In other words, we don't know what will happen, but we're going to do it anyway. How one can equate this with mere commonsense, let alone Christian morality, is beyond my understanding.

AND when we consider the long-range effects of a modern war, its emergence as a new social influence is clearer than ever. In the past, wars changed societies, but it was over a long period of time during which there was always the possibility of salvage, salvage of the human decency and true civilization that was being swallowed up. But today things happen too fast and

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travel too fast. Today, in the brief space of a few weeks, central Europe can be made a shambles, a city of two hundred thousand can be completely demolished and half its population killed or dying, by one bomb, in a split second; and life is reduced to the most primitive struggle for mere survival. Under such conditions ideals of Christian enlightenment are meaningless. In other words, the issues about which the war was fought have disappeared along with organized society. What happened on a relatively small scale in Europe will happen to the whole civilized West in an atomic war. . . .

Finally, I cannot resist a reply to your assertion that armed hostilities do not necessarily mean a negation of the admonition to love your enemies. Translated into terms of modern warfare, this means that a bomber pilot says, "My dears, I love you like a brother, but . . ."

In short, in my view modern war just doesn't pay. Moreover, it produces a deficit. The last two World Wars contributed in a major degree to producing conditions—political, economic, moral and intellectual—on the whole no better, and in many persons' opinion much worse, than the situation which produced the war in the first place.

Modern war, and the situations that produce war today, are both a product of that history of violence which is the West's most unique feature. We have carried this history to the extremity of today, where we are literally just a step from annihilating human life entirely. Unfortunately for us, there is no supreme authority which can physically prevent us from doing this, as was the case of the duel. There is only one alternative left: to voluntarily prevent war by simply not fighting. If you can think of anything better than that, I shall be glad to hear it. However, I want something a little more realistic than such pathetically deluded institutions as the UN. As long as the world is as irrevocably divided into the rich and the poor as it is today, any effort by such well-meaning but completely futile organizations to maintain the status quo (and that was the real object of the UN, to maintain the white man's shaky position of top-dog) is foredoomed to failure. . . .

I hope you don't think I underestimate the consequences of pacifism. I am sufficiently familiar with the kind of "pacifism" which thinks that the munitions makers are the cause of wars, or that if only the peoples of the world could get together, everything would be sweetness and light. That may have been the case at one time, but we are far past that now. As A. Coomaraswamy said, "People want peace, but not the things that make for peace." (That little gem, incidentally, is worth all the tomes written about international affairs over the last fifty years.) I honestly see, considering the superficiality of current attempts by our moral authority to combat the overwhelming influences of today's materialism, very little hope for the survival of anything resembling the civilized tradition of the West, let alone anything remotely resembling a truly Christian society. . . .

H. C. FRANCIS.

## Of Note

### *Materialists*

THE Catholic Social Guild (Oxford, England) recently published a booklet "The Menace of Materialism" by Paul Crane, S.J. The booklet is composed of four essays based on a course of sermons preached at the London Farm Street Church.

Man is a human being and has the right to live as such. Therefore he has, further, a right to the means necessary to the fulfilment of this fundamental right; to a decent sufficiency of this world's goods, to what Pope Leo XIII described in *Rerum Novarum* as "frugal comfort." What must be noticed at once is that this right to a reasonable standard is *not an end in itself*, but a means to an end. By that I mean quite simply that sufficient food, shelter and clothing—in short, a reasonable standard of living—are not desirable primarily in themselves, but because and simply because their possession makes possible the exercise of human powers and so furthers man's development as a human being. By contrast the lack of these things is not intrinsically evil, is not evil in itself; for if it were those saints who have chosen hunger, poverty or vagabondage as a way of life would never have been canonized. The lack of these things is not evil in itself, but in its effect, which is to deprive the normal man of the chance duly to exercise his human powers and so to act in a human way and so to develop as a human being and, thereby, to honor God. . . .

Nevertheless, to condemn the evils flowing from the abuses of Capitalism is not to approve thereby of any and every method used to remove them. That is precisely what the materialist humanitarian does and that is why, in nine cases out of ten, the net result of his reforming zeal is to create a monster worse than the evil he set out to eradicate. For his approach is essentially unprincipled. Being materialist, it could scarcely be anything else. His gaze goes skin-deep and leads to his condemnation of bad social conditions for the wrong reasons; for what they are in themselves and not because of their adverse effect on the dignity of human nature. That phrase means little to the materialist because God means little to him. And where God is left aside man is not seen as possessed of dignity because created by God and made in His image. . . . Hence the endeavor of the materialist reformer stops short at the removal of discomfort, which it is his particular tragedy to confuse with inhumanity. He does not see that the all-important thing is the *means* he uses to achieve his end; that carelessness in this regard may spawn an evil greater by far than that which he sets out to eradicate; that in the end he may exchange the

evil effects of poverty only for those which flow at once from the establishment of an all-powerful, omniscient State.

And because the evil of the all-powerful State is outside his reckoning he proceeds, by an understandable paradox, to create it. For he believes that bad social conditions can be removed by entrusting more and more power to the State machine, by creating a type of State paternalism that takes increasing care of the individual while leaving less and less to the free, responsible exercise of his human powers. And he reckons that a materialist people tired of insecurity and without regard for its own dignity because no longer acquainted with its God, is willing that it should be so. Seeing that possibility he proceeds to try to make it actual, often without malice in his heart, but equally without regard to its evil effect on human dignity. Man has a right to a decent sufficiency of this world's goods. But what could be more futile than to secure him that sufficiency while crippling him in the exercise of those very powers, which the fulfilment of his right to a sufficiency is meant to facilitate? . . .

Once established, the evil I have described moves forward by a relentless logic of its own, for materialism in the social field is cumulative in its effects. To achieve its end of arranging everything in the supposed interests of all, it draws up its plans and blueprints and statutory orders whose administration it entrusts to a bureaucracy which is the concomitant always of the paternal State. Inevitably that bureaucracy becomes overworked, for administration under such circumstances is a complicated business. It finds life tiresome; and to make it less so it shelters behind regulations, which are made general in their application and which therefore take less and less account of individual circumstances. Again, there is little deliberate malice in this: only weariness reinforcing the general tendency of an unthinking materialism to disregard the valid claims of the individual human person.

This tendency is reinforced further by a "re-forming" frame of mind more ruthless than that which we have just considered and more loudly heard nowadays than ever it was before. This is that unpleasant expression of the materialist mentality which equates moral worth with social utility, which values a man, not for what he is but for what he can do. Combined in its possessors with an unhealthy desire to bustle around and run people's lives for them, it constitutes a still more serious threat to individual liberty; for its bustling exterior conceals a lust for power which would proceed, if given the chance, to drive men by force into a so-called earthly Utopia of its own designing. If these people have their way it will be but a short step from the materialism which creates the paternal State to that which reserves its benefits to the "socially useful."

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# Books

*The Riddle Of MacArthur.* John Gunther. Harper. \$2.75.

JOHN GUNTHER, a careful observer, has given us a vignette of a MacArthur who would perhaps have found himself more at home in either Hollywood or Berchtesgaden.

Gunther's book is frightening, in a sense, as when we are told that prior to the outbreak of war MacArthur visited Korea for only one day; that MacArthur has practically never left downtown Tokyo; that MacArthur has met only twelve Japanese in five years. And one also shudders when Gunther talks about "the Oriental mind" as if God made *two* human minds. What he means, of course, is that he couldn't speak Japanese and hence found Japan mysterious.

The arrogance of General MacArthur is underlined here and there by Gunther, particularly in the statement that the Far Eastern Commission "has never dared to overrule" SCAP and the observation that SCAP has a perfect genius for taking the guts out of directives from higher authority. Gunther assures us, however, that "There has never been an instance in MacArthur's history of specific refusal to obey an order." The conclusion is that MacArthur has been too smart to get caught at such a simple act of insubordination. "Never in the history of all mankind have so few told so many," one might write in the General's corny prose. Gunther nevertheless exposes to light that one unchallenged and magnificent facet of the character of Douglas MacArthur: courage.

Chapter Four, dealing in the main with MacArthur's pre-election campaign through the Hearst Press and the Brooklyn *Tablet*, seeking nomination as President while on the payroll as a General, should be read and re-read for it may be repeated before the 1952 polls are closed. This includes MacArthur's relations with the press which in general compare well with the press relations of Jo-

seph Stalin or J. P. Morgan. The chapter ends with the happy thought that MacArthur thinks of himself and the Pope as "the two leading representatives of Christianity in the world today."

Gunther notes that "fraternization was never forbidden in Japan." This is absolutely untrue; see the order of 6 June 1946. Further, Japanese have been barred from decent relations with Americans for years, exacerbating in Japan a virulent anti-white racism which Gunther unfortunately could not sense in his short stay. But Gunther did notice that few Americans could speak any Japanese, underlining the dislike by Japanese for an alien ruler obsessed with *herrenvolk* conceptions. MacArthur reduced the Japanese to second-class status. To a military man, of course, that is quite logical.

Chapter 7, "The Record of the Occupation" contains descriptions of Occupation achievements better read at first hand in the complete reports rather than in Gunther's condensations and incompetent evaluations. He highlights correctly MacArthur's signal contribution to democracy: increased birth control and abortions and a record sale of contraceptives. All that is lacking in this chapter is a recording of the number of gallons of Coca-Cola sold in Japan.

The concluding chapters read as if Gunther dictated them directly to the linotyper. Nevertheless there is sufficient material and potent observation in the *The Riddle of MacArthur* to make it worth the reading.

RICHARD DEVERALL.

*The Fire in the Dust.* Francis MacManus. Harcourt. \$3.

HOW DO THEY do it—these Irish and these English? Birth and death, hate and love, the rise of love and its extinction; the simplicity which emotion and passion make complex—these themes are

theirs, and they write of them with dignity, with a respect for our common language, with pride and simple, formal love. None of them seems able to write inferiorly, and, often, they write with greatness.

This is mainly a story about a young English boy, living in Ireland, whose ways and beliefs, whose habits and whose speech were a rebuke to the zealotry, the concupiscence, the inverted purity of the Irish, whose unnaturalness is a kind of obscenity, in respect of which their lives are shadowed by fear and shame, reticence and withdrawal, and who live and speak not in privacy, but in covertness.

Arland Ussher, in *The Face and Mind of Ireland*, says that when an Irishman with his girl reaches a quiet spot, he says to the girl: "Take your ease now, Mary, whiles I have a few pulls of me pipe." The Irish, whose alleged romanticism is pure myth, are a shame-ridden people and are afraid of love, of sexual love. Whether this must be attributed to their priests or to the Druids I do not know; but that it is a cursed fact I know. And Mr. MacManus knows it, and it is, largely, about this that he is writing.

When the young English boy speaks to his Irish classmates of his mother and says, "She was beautiful. I hardly remember her. They were very much in love, I think, and . . ." the young Irishman, in whose person the story is told, says of himself: "I began to run faster and to draw away from him so that I should hear no more. Here was talk that seemed to me a breaking of privacy as well as horrible disrespect. I had never heard it said before by any boy of his parents or his aunts or uncles. I had never even speculated until that moment whether I should ever hear it said outside the pages of the romantic novels that my mother borrowed from the library and into which I peeped occasionally. What had love to do with people so grave and hard-working as parents—with Brody's parents, or Kinsella's, or Tobin's, or mine? Boys and girls and grown-up people had often bantered one another about being in love or had passed remarks about how

Mr. So-and-so was killed buying presents and writing notes to Miss Such-and-such because he was in love, and the satirical laugh had never been absent, or at least, the serious note had never been present in their voices. There was something odd, funny, unnatural and even daft about love. It was a vagary. It could always raise a laugh, but never this respect, such as Stevie revealed. It was, besides, mildly criminal, because didn't other chaps like myself become hotly and belligerently wrathful whenever we were accused, by word of mouth or by scribbles on walls, that we had been detected in the daftness? Stevie could be pardoned, of course, for what he had said, as he was a foreigner. But he had embarrassed me, and I ran from him with my face flaming."

I have chosen this quotation because it is around this revealed belief and its opposition that the novel moves. That its opposite should be regarded as foreignness and thus provide occasion for righteous self-defense, for the furthering of alienation, of lack of compassion, of the breakup and ruin of the English family, of the hurt of his spirit and the death of a young boy, all these things make the passage the core of the book.

**M**R. MACMANUS is almost rather a dramatist than a novelist for, like Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter*, he creates scenes—filling them with horror, with fascination, with suspensive dread, and through them advancement is made and character made manifest and fulfilled. He writes beautifully, with mastery always of his materials and with detachment.

But his power to create and dominate his scenes is not less than his power to call character into existence so that his people move our blood, evoke our anger and our pity and enter our minds and remain in our memories.

He etches a portrait of a frenzied and malevolent woman, without himself ever making a formal judgment on her. It is a portrait which is cumulative, which takes life and

grows. It is the artistic creation of a woman who drips infection into what is clean and who gives to purity the rancid odor of her festered mind: "To be sure, Miss Dreelin's desperation was filling up, becoming turbulent, corrosive of restraint and good sense, but there is nothing precise that one can tell about the landscape of her soul. One can conceive images apt to her situation and one must be content with them though their dignity and their poetry be of the faintest; how she, exemplar of so many other people, had driven a whole reach of life underground as though it bore only the excrements of humanity, damned it up, felt at last the need and power of it, dug deeply for it, and found it bursting out over boundaries and flooding what had been a primly tended, rightly ordered landscape. Psychologists might use one set of images; priests another; poets yet another. They would all be images and symbols only of the reality, not the faintly discerned reality itself. If it was play-acting, then Miss Dreelin became the part she played; the mock Fury believed in the toy serpents in her hair and the bogus blood dripping from her eyes."

And in Stevie Golden he makes us know again, what we ought never to have forgotten, the wistfulness and the loneliness of the young.

I do not speak here of the other people in the book; for I am writing only a review of an Irish novel whose importation to our own country should be, I think, received as a spiritual gift, a thing to us of great joy.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

*The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941. Edited by D. D. Paige. Harcourt. \$5.*

*An Examination of Ezra Pound. A collection of essays edited by Peter Russell. New Directions. \$3.75.*

**I** HAD always hoped I would live long enough to read Ezra Pound's correspondence, which I figured would hardly be publishable in less than fifty years after his

death; but here it is, or at least a careful selection of it. And it is all that I and my generation had hoped it would be—funny, irreverent, scurrilous, quotable, clever, sincere, and, above all, readable. Every scrap Pound ever wrote, from a penny postcard to *The Cantos*, is readable, and sooner or later the American public is going to find this out, even if it takes two world wars and a treason charge to convince them.

I can't speak for America, but to young men who went to college in the thirties in Britain and Ireland Pound meant something like what Mencken meant to young Americans of the twenties. Not that Mencken as a literary craftsman ought to be mentioned in the same sentence with Pound, but both were iconoclasts—occasionally they smashed the same ikons, as you may see from Pound's letters to Mencken—and the young love the noise of things breaking. Even the taint of alleged treason that hung around both did them no harm, for the young of those decades were suspicious of many things that claimed their loyalty. Finally, as perennial adolescents themselves, they naturally appealed to adolescents of every generation.

A number of the writers in *An Examination of Ezra Pound* seem agreed that Pound never quite grew up until, ironically, after he had endured the brutalities of the Military Police in the US detention camp at Pisa. D. S. Carne-Ross quotes from *The Pisan Cantos*:

Tard, très tard, je t'ai connue,  
la Tristesse,  
I have been hard as youth sixty  
years.

For all those years Pound was able to go on believing that if only the technique of English verse could be somewhat improved, if only a certain number of governments would improve their financial techniques along Social Credit lines, the Golden Age would come again.

Like many another extrovert American of similar beliefs, he "got a lot done," particularly by fostering the talents of Eliot and Joyce. He even succeeded in improving English verse technique. But it was behind the barbed wire at Pisa that he

first learned that life is tragic, that since the Fall no Golden Age is possible, that the enemy he had been battling all those years lay ultimately within himself. G. S. Fraser quotes, from the already-famous "Pull down thy vanity" passage in *The Pisan Cantos*:

It was not man  
Made courage, or made order,  
or made grace.

Pound had written in a letter to Harriet Monroe many years before that "Christianity as practised resumes itself into one commandment. . . . Thou shalt attend to thy neighbor's business before attending to thine own," without realizing how obedient he himself was to the same commandment.

But here I am moralizing in, heaven knows, a most unPoundian manner. All I can really say in less than a Macaulayan 20,000 words is, *read the letters!* They are full of surprises. For one thing, I did not know that Pound had a hand in both the best English translations of the century—Binyon's of Dante

and Rouse's of Homer; both men in all humility sought him out, and he in equal humility offered them his advice.

Furthermore, Pound's own readability has infected his (mainly British) Examiners. They all, from Eliot and Wyndham Lewis to chaps you never heard of before, have something to say, and say it well. Besides those already mentioned, John Drummond and Hugh Gordon Porteous are particularly informative on, respectively, the Italian and Chinese backgrounds of *The Cantos*. Most of the other essays, too, are elucidatory rather than critical. As Pound might have said, "Gimme the fac's and I'll do the crittycizin' meself."

Peter Russell, besides contributing an excellent biographical introduction, has obviously edited *An Examination* instead of just throwing it together. Mr. Paige too has done a good job on the *Letters*. The live quality of such scholarship as theirs shows once more that the agony of Ezra has not been wholly in vain.

VIVIAN MERCIER.

*Old Friends and New Music.*  
Nicholas Nabokov. Little, Brown.  
\$3.50.

NICHOLAS Nabokov composes and teaches music in the United States. The present book contains his memoirs. As the title indicates, the author himself remains in the background, but through his eyes we see all his friends of the past and present, and come to judge their music through his ears. Nabokov has a talent for description which is exceptional. The people and places of his childhood, Diaghilev (to whom he was remotely related), Nijinsky, Prokofiev, Koussevitzky, Stravinsky, and many others are described with brilliance, and often with a delightful, heart-warming humor. Only a man with a sense of the tragic can have such humor. And there are haunting pages, for example the one on the sick Nijinsky, or those which give you a hint of the nostalgia of the émigré. As would be expected in a book written by a composer, many

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of the statements on music are highly subjective. (Scriabin: "plowing heavily, with the help of all the nineteenth century's paraphernalia, through the esoteric clouds of a confused mysticism." Sibelius and Strauss: "antediluvian". Actually, I have a dark suspicion that the Antediluvian who wrote the score of "Till Eulenspiegel" had a hand in a lot of the music which Mr. Nabokov admires unreservedly.)

In a way the title of Mr. Nabokov's book is ill-chosen. A large circle of readers who would be attracted by the charm, the humor, and the human message of its story may be kept from reading it because they think a book which deals with Diaghilev, Stravinsky, Massine, and others is a high-brow musical affair.

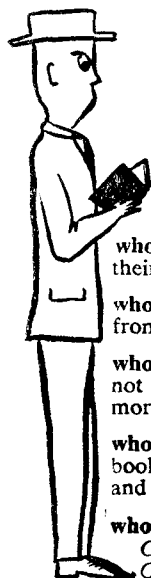
The Panslavist ideologists of the last century, even Dostoevsky himself, regarded anyone who "Westernized," either culturally or politically, as a traitor. This idea has assumed diabolical proportions under Stalin's new Panslavism. Actually there is no native, earthbound form of cul-

ture which lends itself better to cross-pollination than the Russian one. This is best demonstrated in Music. Tchaikovsky presents a happy blend of something genuinely Slavic and something Western, particularly the French brand of romanticism. Prokofiev and Stravinsky present a blend of the same Russian element with the German classical tradition, and the Western archaic classicism of Paris in the early twenties.

THIS precisely is the impression which Mr. Nabokov conveys in his book, perhaps without intending it. How well all these creative artists became assimilated into their adopted countries without sacrificing that which is specifically native! How well particularly they blend with their North-American background! Our Neo-Panslavists want to make us see two irreconcilable worlds, not only economically but also culturally, while in many of the new Americans of this book, in Stravinsky, Kousse-

vitzky, in the author himself, we perceive the first hint of a new synthesis. Dostoevsky (the artist, not the politician) may have had intuitive feelings of this sort. Among his posthumous notes there were sketches for the continuation of *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this future plot Alyosha was to emigrate to North America. What a strange idea: the man who represents the true spirit of Russia, in a North American setting! I often tried to figure out what might have become of Alexei Fiodorovitch Karamazov in America. Yet it still exists, this true spirit of Russia, and (contrary to Panslavist doctrine) it may perhaps come out properly whenever it "Westernizes." This feeling is somehow transmitted to the reader, particularly in the last pages of Mr. Nabokov's charming story. This is the point at which the book exceeds the scope of the lovely memoirs of a musician. Let us hope that there lies the hint of the happier future of a world ripped in two.

KARL STERN.



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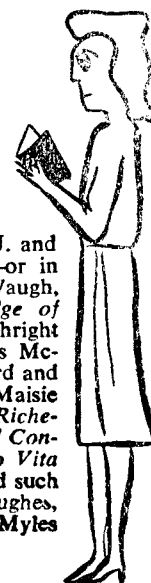
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*The Witch Diggers. Jessamyn West. Harcourt. \$3.50.*

THE READING of current fiction often makes a person wonder what happens to the good, imaged writing which appears, among other places, in college composition classes. The complaint that this type of creation, by reason, perhaps, of its realness and effectiveness, is not marketable would seem to be gainsaid with the publication of books like this one. There is a tone of authenticity about this story which follows from the writer's knowledge of what she is saying, and from her interest in her material as something more than merchandise.

Descriptions of seasons with vivid images for the eye and the ear, of house functions with smells of cooking, feels of clothing and furniture, the remembrance of tastes and touches and tensions which flood from a world that has been experienced, and is, thereby, well known, form an important part of this novel. They make an essential background for this re-creation of family life in an Indiana Poor House.

The title is not appropriate. It may be a concession to sales promotion advice. The Conboys of the Poor House are the real subjects of this story. Link, an idealist, a reformer, who superintends the place and fathers the family, has an earthy, voluble, volatile wife in Lib, a headstrong son in Dandie, a dreaming, loving daughter in Cate, and a wise, calamitous baby in Em. The difficulty of running the Poor House for Link, the hardship of raising a family for Lib, the adversities in romance for Dandie and Cate, and the troubles of the whole world for Em constitute the narrative element of the book. The activities of the poor people, a genial crowd, are also dealt with, and it is the nocturnal digging of James Abel and his sister for the lost something whose discovery will restore happiness to the world that is the basis for the title.

But the characters, notwithstanding their liveliness, are overwhelmed by the incidents. Miss West's greatest power here is in the scenic parts; her people are overshadowed by the

dramatic and melodramatic actions of which there are plenty. A house dance, a burial of an infant, and its interruption by an inmate who used turpentine to cure a social disease, a Christmas dinner, an engagement party, a Fourth of July picnic, a mob scene, and a fire all give the author a chance to employ her talent for imagery and her ability of instilling life into words and phrases by use of family colloquialisms and regional patois.

All in all, this book, though not so closely pared as it might be—some of the incidents are irrelevant, others disproportionate—is valuable for its sensitive seasonal pictures, its nostalgic personal reflections, and its understanding of the complexity of family life with alternations of joy and sorrow and the natural, necessary resiliency which permits the members to progress.

GEORGE MILES.

*The Crown and the Cross. Theodore Maynard. McGraw-Hill. \$4.50.*

M R. MAYNARD is an authority on the Tudor period, and on the nineteenth century. He is also a distinguished poet, and this quality he uses to bring out to the full the tragedy of the destruction brought to England by Thomas Cromwell. The lovely sixteenth century "lament for Walsingham" epitomizes the deliberate horrors Cromwell perpetrated, and his dire influence on the mercurial Henry VIII has never been better analyzed. Henry, the Defender of the Faith, who daily heard three Masses, and begged the priest at the Consecration to "Heave higher, that I may better behold my Lord" became the butcher who tortured John Forest, the Carthusian, to death by slow fire, and who destroyed and plundered the beauty of centuries of English building, stained glass, goldsmith's ware, and manuscripts. Soberly, letting the evidence speak for itself, Dr. Maynard shows what the Cromwellian persecutions were, and how the Renaissance, which came April-sweet to Italy, when it

first came to England, blew in gusty draughts like a March gale.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

*The Nineteen Fifties Come First. Edwin G. Nourse. Holt. \$2.*

THE former chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers makes a broad appeal in this short book for patriotic action and self-restraint. He thinks primarily in terms of the nation's three principal economic groups: farmers, workers and business men. Mr. Nourse recognizes the claims of each to government solicitude; he also calls upon each to re-examine its group demands in the light of the common interest. He opposes chronic deficit financing in Washington and criticizes the Administration for yielding to popular pressure and reducing taxes when it should have been reducing the national debt and checking inflation in the prosperous post-war years. Mr. Nourse believes that these warnings, which he drew up last summer, are increasingly pertinent as the nation mobilizes.

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## • REVIEWERS •

RICHARD DEVERALL was Chief of Labor Education on General MacArthur's staff in Tokyo. He recently returned to the US after a year in India as representative of the AFL.

VIVIAN MERCIER, who teaches literature courses at Columbia and the City College of New York, is preparing an anthology of Irish prose.

KARL STERN, a practicing psychiatrist in Montreal, was formerly associated with the University of Munich. *Pillar of Fire*, the story of his conversion to Catholicism, will soon be published by Harcourt, Brace.

GEORGE MILES is a free-lance critic and a graduate of Notre Dame.

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# Idea for a Magazine VII

**C**HRISTIANITY is not and never has been, as some people fancy, a religion of escape from matter. From the beginning it opposed acosmic pretensions as much as it denounced the old pagan superstitions. Its idea of man is not that being of which so many dreamed, that divine spark fallen into an evil or illusory world whose salvation lies in escaping from its prison. In such a world Christianity has no task to perform; it can only leave the world to its fate or awaken it to a consciousness of its own non-entity.

For the Christian, the world is the real world of a good God and has real value. It is more than the mere stage on which man acts or the instrument he uses; it is, so to speak, the stuff of the world to come, the raw material of our eternity. Man's task is not to liberate himself from time but to liberate himself through time; not to escape from the world but to accept it. . . .

Man is made of the earth whose whole history is summed up, prolonged and transformed in him; he is animated by a divine breath which makes him eternal. He must accept his twofold origin which makes his twofold nature, not as the inexorable sign of a double oppression but as the starting point of a double liberation. He must transfigure, not deny, the two relations he derives from that double origin. Let him then make this universe, in which at first he appears naked, the means of building himself up and developing all the possibilities of his natural being by the work of his mind and hand. And let him also humbly admit his dependence and raise himself up, by responding to the call of a sublimer destiny, to the height of union with his Creator.

HENRI DE LUBAC, S.J.

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